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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
MARYLAND**

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**FY04  
Exit Survey Report**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To realize its vision of being the best place to live and work, the County must develop a comprehensive, ongoing strategic process that will facilitate recruitment and retention of a qualified and diverse workforce. This approach will position the County to adapt to the emerging demographics and service needs of Montgomery County.

The County has globally tracked employee separations and turnover rate for 20 years. Turnover rate is based on employees who leave permanent merit County positions each calendar year. Within the last ten years, the highest turnover rate was in 1994 (9.40%) when the County implemented the Retirement Savings Plan (R.S.P). Between 1995 and 2003, the turnover rate has ranged from 4.96% to 6.16%. The Personnel Management Review Report (PMR) reports that for calendar year 2002, the turnover rate was 6.05 % and 6.16% for 2003, showing that there is not a significant change. The 2004 (PMR) data will be available in April, 2005.

Although turnover rates are frequently cited as a benchmark for successful personnel programs, there are few available benchmarks. Organizations have different ways to calculate the turnover rate; some organizations include all type of transfers, job classes, and various employment status. For example, the County does not include political appointments and temporary employees in the County rates. In 2002, the average national turnover rate for all industries was 15.6% and 15% for government (Fortune Magazine, 2002). Using best estimates about how rates were determine for other organizations, a proxy rate of 14% was calculated for the County. Thus, comparing to other available turnover rates, the County's turnover rate is below the norm.

Feedback from employees who separate from County service provides valuable information on both the favorable and less favorable aspects of County employment. FY 03 marked the first full year of collecting exiting employee data based on separation reasons and employee's experience regarding County employment. Based on the FY 03 analysis, the following initiatives are being implemented:

- The CAO and the Senior Management Team has approved mandatory core supervisory training for County managers and supervisors;
- A Manager Development program will be implemented in FY05 to develop leadership competencies of potential County managers;
- The Executive Summary of the Exit Survey Report was provided to senior management for their review; and
- An on-line web-based version of the survey was implemented.

The FY 04 Exit Survey report has two parts. The first part of this report presents the statistical workforce analysis of 440 exiting employees during FY04. The separation and descriptive information comes from the Human Resources Management Systems (HRMS). The second part reports the statistical analysis of the exit survey completed by employees. This survey addressed satisfaction with benefits, work life and working conditions, workforce development, compensation, and management relationships.

Employees were also asked what they liked and disliked about their employment, their reasons for leaving, and suggestions for improvement.

### **Summary of Results**

Organizational turnover is desirable as long as there is balance and infrastructures are in place to capture knowledge management. New employees bring innovative ideas, approaches, and abilities. Experienced employees provide the knowledge management, stability, and continuity. Turnover not managed can be costly, especially in recruiting and training new employees. Based on the workforce separation analysis, the County does not have a high turnover rate.

The opinions of former employees as to the reasons for leaving present areas of strengths as well as areas for improvement. The majority of exiting employees left the County within the first five years of employment for personal reasons. Among the opinion areas, the lowest satisfaction ratings were for management relations and workforce development.

### **Workforce findings:**

- The largest percent of separation reasons was for employees leaving for personal reasons followed by normal retirement.
- The largest turnover rate for employees leaving in the first five years for personal reasons was in the positions of Police Telecommunication I and II and the Social Worker I.
- About one third of separated employees stayed with the County between one and five years; the average length of service is 12.8 years for exiting employees.
- Among the EEO employment categories, employees from Protective Services had the highest percent of exiting employees; this is consistent with their representation as the largest County employment category. This is followed by Professionals.
- Whites represent the largest ethnic group of separated employees. This is consistent with their representation as the largest ethnic group in the County.

### **Opinion findings from survey respondents:**

- Benefits are viewed positively.
- Over sixty percent of survey respondents were satisfied with benefits and work life and working conditions.
- Slightly over fifty percent of respondents were satisfied with compensation.
- Less than fifty percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with workforce development and management.
- Employees who leave the County in the first five years for personal reasons expressed more dissatisfaction with workforce development.

## Recommendations

The workforce analysis and the exit survey opinion responses provide valuable baseline data for workforce development and workforce planning. Former employees are given the opportunity to offer their opinions and express their feelings about the organization's work environment. With this knowledge, we can understand our strengths and identify areas for organizational improvement.

Although the County does not have a high turnover rate, the highest concentration of turnover is among employees with five or less years of tenure. The low turnover rate could be an impediment to career development. Thus, the challenge is to improve retention among employees who are leaving the County between five or less years of service.

The following recommendations are offered as a comprehensive approach to improve workforce retention:

- Aggressively pursue workforce development and optimize employee learning by:
  - Developing rotational assignments to challenge and enhance career mobility among employees in different work units within the same department.
  - Creating a training plan that matches the employee's professional development needs and organizational needs.
  - Requiring employees who attended seminars, conferences, or training classes to share what they have learned and how they will apply the knowledge gained.
  - Continually looking for ways to incorporate learning and knowledge sharing into the organization, brown bag sessions, and lessons learned.
- Develop a mentoring "Buddy System" for new employees by matching experienced employees with new employees.
- Develop a strategy to gather feedback from employees in their initial months of employment to help with identifying potential issues and training needs.
- Improve management communication. Management style and communication continues to be a concern for employees leaving County employment. Training and development is a must for managers and supervisors. Employees are looking for challenging and stimulating work, flexible work hours, educational opportunities, and a participatory management style.
- Implement an orientation program for new MLS employees as recommended by the spring 2002 class Leadership Institute. This program will focus on providing resources and materials to new managers.
- Take a close look at positions with a high turnover rate to improve issues related to salary, stress, work load, and shift work.

- Educate department representatives in the importance of working with exiting employees leaving for personal reasons so that information is better reflected on the PAF codes.
- Build the exit survey process in an integrated system so that employees will complete the survey prior to leaving County employment. This will not affect references to their future employment. Currently, employees are completing the Exit survey approximately four to six weeks after leaving County services.
- Continue to track and project detailed information on separation reasons and obtain information from all exiting employees.
- Provide department directors with the Exit Survey data relevant to their department and work with management to develop retention strategies to address areas of concern.

## **FISCAL YEAR 2004 COUNTY-WIDE EXIT SURVEY**

Employee turnover facilitates the influx of new ideas, skills, talents, and energy into an organization. However, it could be costly for the organization by increasing the cost of recruiting and training for new employees, loss of corporate memory, and service disruption. In general, organizations with low turnover offer fewer opportunities for upward mobility.

The County has globally tracked employee separation for nearly 20 years. Turnover rate is based on employees who leave permanent merit County positions each calendar year (Attachment 1, Turnover rate). Within the last ten years, the highest turnover rate was in 1994 (9.40%) when the County implemented the Retirement Incentive Program (RSP). From 1995 to 2003, the turnover rate ranged from 4.96% to 6.16%. For calendar year 2002, the turnover rate was 6.05 % and 6.16% for 2003.

The County's turnover rate for calendar years 2002 and 2003 is very similar, 6.05% and 6.16 % respectively (Personnel Management Review Report). Considering that there are no statistical differences and that the turnover rate is calendar based, we are not reporting turnover rates in this report. The County does not report discontinuation of temporary positions or separation from non-permanent positions. The baseline number of employees in calculating the turnover rate is the average number of employees at the end of each fiscal quarter.

Understanding why employees leave County employment is a strategy for improving workforce retention. Surveying exiting employees is an approach to elicit information from employees about the organization's culture, work life, and other reasons not available in the PAF codes. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) developed and implemented a County-wide exit survey to obtain information regarding exiting employees' perception and level of satisfaction with various aspects of their County employment, such as benefits, work life and working conditions, workforce development, and management. In addition, the survey elicits information about areas of improvements that can be proposed to increase satisfaction and to improve retention with County employment.

FY04 was the second full year of collecting County-wide data from exiting employees. This report is in two parts. The first part presents the statistical analysis from HRMS and it is from all exit employees who were asked to participate in the survey. The separation and descriptive information such as ethnicity, gender, and EEO Employment category are included. The second part of this report presents the statistical analysis from the opinion data. This opinion information was provided by those individuals who responded to the survey.

## **WORKFORCE ANALYSIS FOR EXITING EMPLOYEES**

This section of the survey presents the workforce information for the 440 exiting employees who were included in the Exit database and had the opportunity to answer the exit survey. The workforce data for those exiting employees was obtained from HRMS.

### **Separations Reasons**

The following five tables and six charts list the number and percent of separations for exiting employees as coded in the Exit database. This data is independent of the responses from the opinion survey.

As presented in Table 1, the principal separation reason during FY04 was for personal reasons (28%) followed by normal retirement (26.4%).

Employee separations were grouped into five main reasons as presented on Table 2: Voluntary Retirement; Voluntary Accepted New Job; Voluntary Others; Involuntary Termination; and Involuntary Dismissal for Cause. Combining normal retirement, early retirement, service-connected disability retirement, non-service-connected disability retirement, and discontinued service retirement. The percent for voluntary retirement is 44% (chart 1).

When grouping personal reasons, leave of absence expiration resigned, relocation out of the area, family responsibilities, return to school, transportation issues, health reasons, quit without notice, and military obligation as “Other Voluntary Retirement,” the percent is 35%. Combining better compensation/benefits, more flexibility in work schedules, better working conditions, more opportunity for advancement, and closer to home/easier commute as Voluntary- Accepted new job, the percent is 11%.



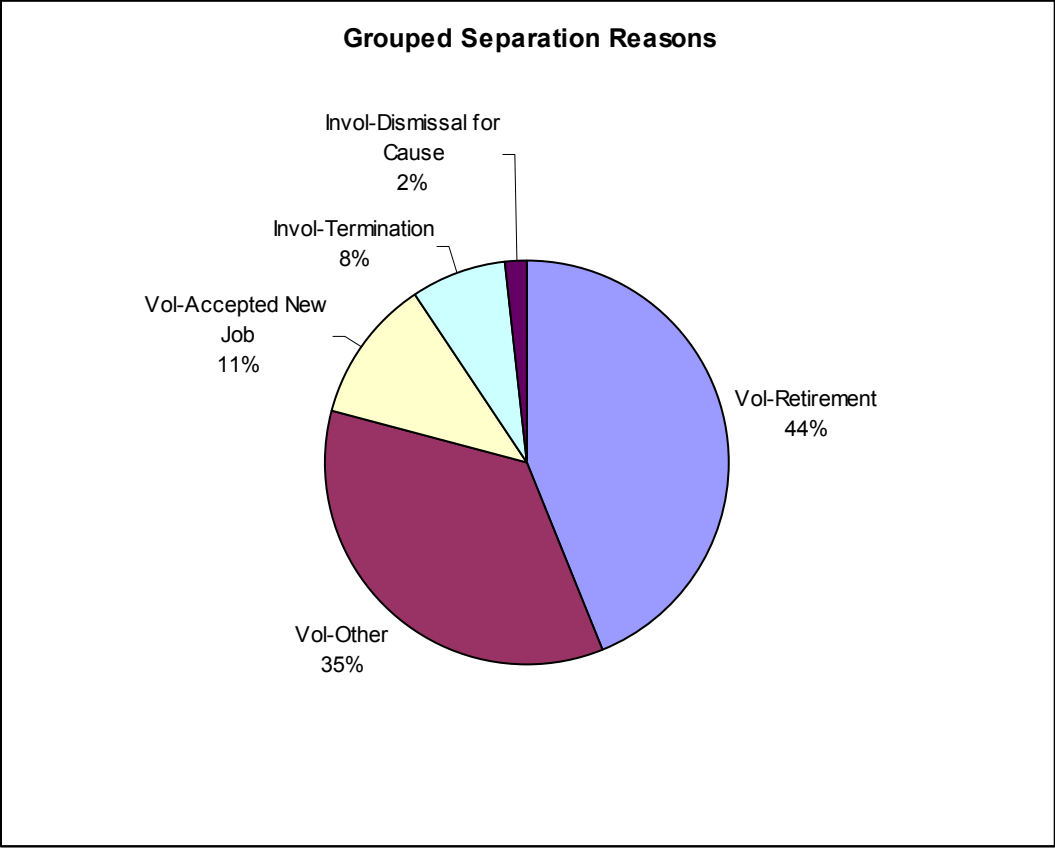
Table 1. Number and percent of separation reasons, FY04

<b>Separation Reasons</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Personal reasons	123	28.0%
Retirement - normal	116	26.4%
Retirement – discontinued service	33	7.5%
Early retirement	33	7.5%
Better compensation/benefits	20	4.5%
More opportunity for advancement	17	3.9%
Relocation out of area	14	3.2%
Closer to home or easier commute	12	2.7%
Family responsibilities	9	2.0%
Failed probation	7	1.6%
Retirement – non-service discontinue	7	1.6%
Other	6	1.4%
Unsatisfactory performance after permanent status	6	1.4%
Misconduct	5	1.1%
Health reason	4	0.9%
Abandonment	3	0.7%
LOA expiration resigned	3	0.7%
LWOP expiration - did not return	4	0.9%
Non-service-connected disability retirement	3	0.7%
Return to school	3	0.7%
RIF	3	0.7%
Excessive absence	2	0.5%
Failure to maintain license	2	0.5%
Quit without notice	2	0.5%
End of term appointment	1	0.2%
More flexibility in work schedule	1	0.2%
Service-connected disability retirement	1	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2. Grouped separation reasons, FY04

<b>Grouped Separation Reasons</b>	<b>Type of Separation</b>
Voluntary Retirement (44%)	Early retirement Non-service-connected disability retirement Ret - discontinued service Ret - normal Ret - service discontinued Service-connected disability retirement
Voluntary-Other (35%)	Family responsibilities Health reason Personal reasons Quit without notice Relocation out of area Return to school LOA expiration resigned Military obligation
Voluntary Accepted New Job (11%)	Better compensation/benefits Closer to home or easier commute More flexibility in work schedule More opportunity for advancement Better working conditions
Involuntary Termination (8%)	Abandonment End of term appointment Failed probation Failure to maintain license LWOP expiration - did not return Other RIF Termination-LWOP>90 days waived reinstatement Termination-DFRS/tobacco Unsatisfactory performance after permanent status
Involuntary Dismissal for Cause (2%)	Excessive absence Misconduct

Chart 1. Grouped separation reasons for exiting employees



## **Separations, Gender and Ethnicity**

In examining the ethnicity groups, the majority of exiting employees (64.32%) are White, followed by African Americans (25.68%). Those are the ethnic groups with the largest number of County employees. The Personnel Management Report for calendar year 2003 shows that the largest percent (62.45%) of County employees are Whites followed by African Americans (24.50%).

Chart 2. Separations by Ethnicity

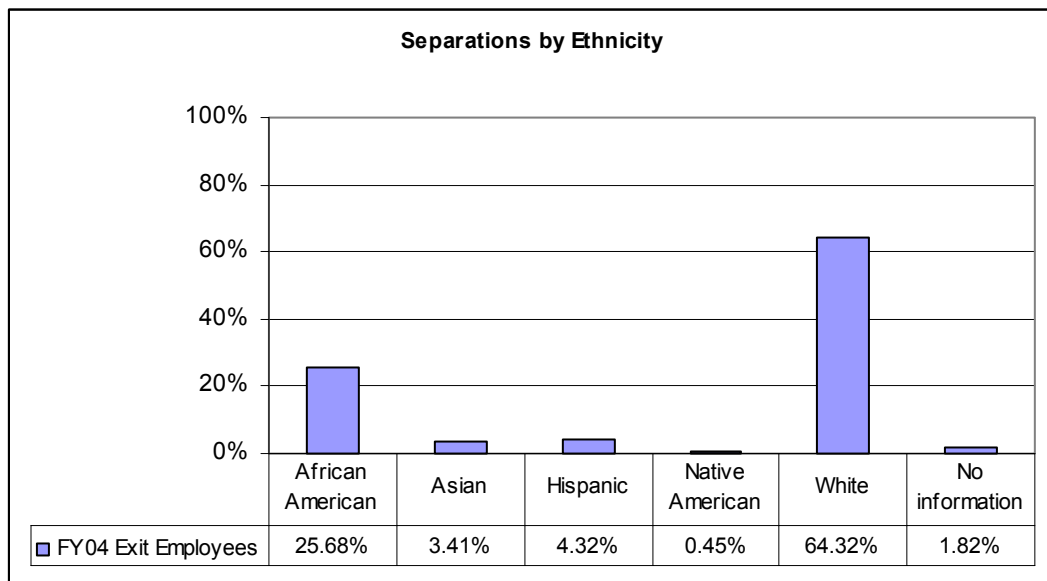
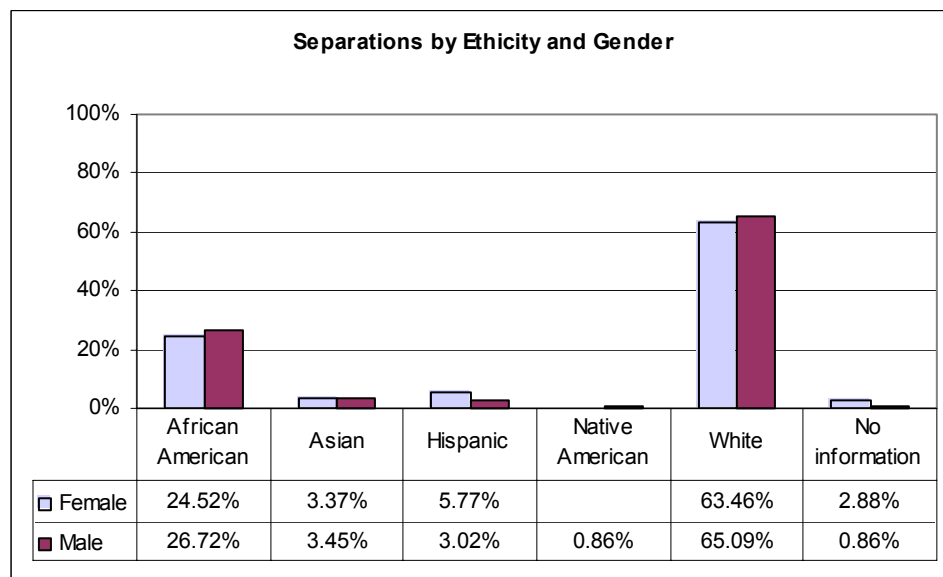
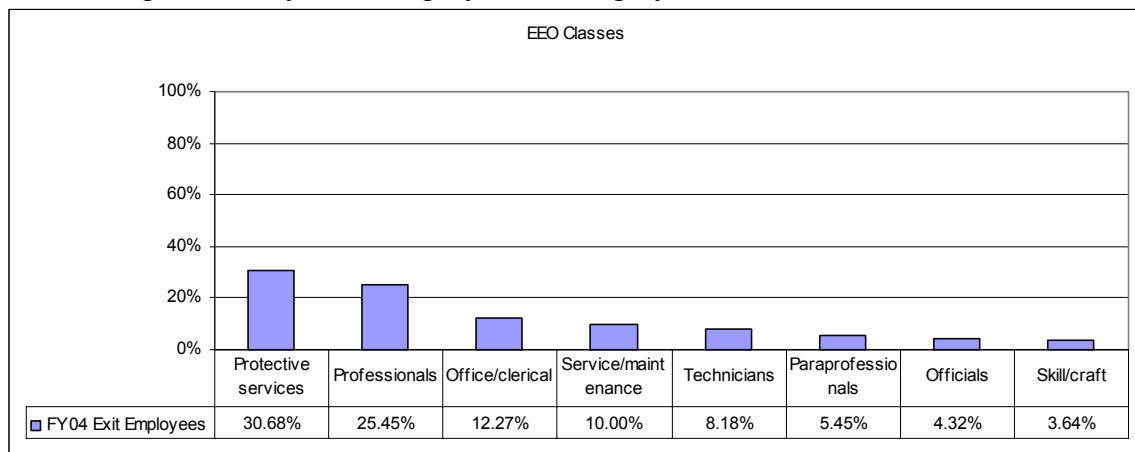


Chart 3. Separations by Ethnicity and Gender for Exiting Employees



## **Separations and Employment Category**

Chart 4. Separations by EEO Employment Category



Employees in Protective Services (uniform personnel in the departments of Police, Correction and Rehabilitation, and of Public Works and Transportation) make-up the largest separation group at 30.68%. The next largest group represented is Professionals at 25.45%. Among professionals, the majority of exiting employees are from HHS (52 out of 112).

## **Separations by Departments**

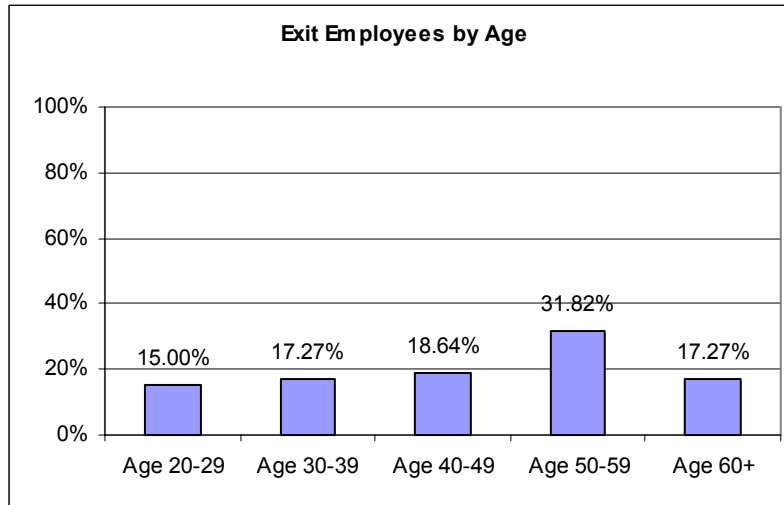
Table 3. Separations by Departments

<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>TOTAL Exiting Employees</b>	<b>%</b>
Health and Human Services	76	17.27%
Police	74	16.82%
Public Works and Transportation	71	16.14%
Fire and Rescue Services	58	13.18%
Correction and Rehabilitation	36	8.18%
Public Library	20	4.55%
Recreation	15	3.41%
Liquor Control	14	3.18%
Sheriff	10	2.27%
County Executive	7	1.59%
Technology Services	7	1.59%
County Attorney's Office	5	1.14%
County Council	5	1.14%
Finance	5	1.14%
Permitting Services	4	0.91%
Environment Protection	4	0.91%
Office of Human Resources	4	0.91%
Housing and Community Affairs	3	0.68%
Management and Budget	3	0.68%
Regional Service Centers	3	0.68%
Supervisor of Elections	3	0.68%
Board of License Commissioner	2	0.45%
Commission for Women	2	0.45%
CUS Community School	2	0.45%
Office of Legislative Oversight	2	0.45%
Procurement	2	0.45%
Human Relation Commission	1	0.23%
Board of Investment Trustees	1	0.23%
Public Information	1	0.23%
GRAND TOTAL	440	100.00%

The highest percentage of employees separating from County service is from the County's largest departments: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Police Department (POL), Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), and Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (COR). For example, at HHS, the majority of exiting employees left for personal reasons (28 out of 76) and this was followed by normal retirement (17 out of 76). Similarly, the majority of exiting employees from POL left for personal reasons (25 out of 74), followed by normal retirement (19 out of 74). By contrast, the majority of exiting employees from FRS took normal retirement (29 out of 58).

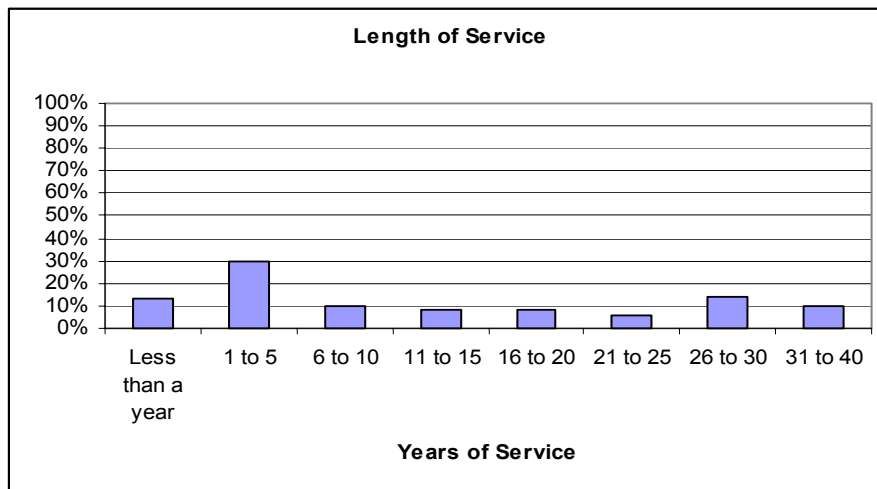
## **Separations, Age and Length of Service**

Chart 5. Separations by Age



Exiting employees between fifty and fifty-nine years of age comprise the largest percent of separated employees (31.82%). In looking at length of service, one third of exiting employees (29.77%) stayed with the County between one and five years, while 13.64% stayed less than a year, and 14.09% of employees remain between twenty-six and thirty years.

Chart 6. Separations by Length of Service



## **Separations and Personal Reasons**

In looking at exiting employees who left for personal reasons, the largest number of exiting employees (71 out of 123) is for former employees who left County employment between one and five years of service and between 20 and 29 years of age.

Table 4. Number of Separations for Personal Reasons by Age and Length of Service

Length of Service	Age					Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	
Less than a year	11	10	4	2	1	28
1 to 5	21	17	14	10	9	71
6 to 10	1	2	5	3	1	12
11 to 15		4	4	2		10
16 to 20		1				1
21 to 25						
26 to 30					1	1
31+						
Total	33	34	27	17	12	123

Among exiting employees who left for personal reasons, the majority (39 out of 123) are from protective services, followed by professionals (30 out of 123). Among the professionals, the majority are from HHS (20 out of 30).

Of the 123 employees who left for personal reasons, 99 stayed with the County five years or less (28 left the first year and 71 between one and five years); and 48 responded to the survey. Among the individuals who commented on why left the County and what that they did not like about their employment, some expressed that management, better compensation, and lack of career advancement opportunities were the main reasons.

Individuals have different sets of needs and expectations about their jobs. Compensation and benefits as well as career development are important to them. Several surveys available on the internet indicate that motivation and good management practices are strategies for reducing turnover and thus increasing retention.

When comparing the satisfaction levels to all exiting employees, we found that there is a significant difference for workforce development. Thirty-eight percent of employees who left for personal reasons and stayed with the County for less than five years expressed satisfaction as compared to the overall forty-six percent satisfaction level.



### **Separations, Personal Reasons, and Job Classes**

In looking at the job classes for individuals who left for personal reasons and stayed with the County for less than five years (table 5), the highest turnover rate is for Police Telecommunication I (17%) followed by Police Telecommunication II (14%), and Social Worker I (14%). The turnover rate is inversely affected by the number of positions available. Thus, a small number of exiting employees can increase the turnover rate for job classes with a small number of incumbents. By contrast, the turnover rate is low for job classes with a large number of incumbents. The number of incumbents was obtained from the Gap analysis report.

Table 5. Job Class Turnover Rate by Personal Separation Reasons

<b>JOB CLASS</b>	<b>INCUMBENTS</b>	<b>FY04 EXIT EMPLOYEES WITH 0 to 5 YEARS OF SERVICE</b>	<b>TURNOVER RATE</b>
Bus Operator	457	14	3%
Corr. Officer I (PVT)	46	3	7%
Corr. Officer II (PFC)	76	4	5%
Police Officer I	170	13	8%
Police Officer Candidate	30	3	10%
Police Telecomm I	23	4	17%
Police Telecomm II	14	2	14%
Social Worker I	7	1	14%
Social Worker II	84	5	6%
Social Worker III	100	1	1%
Program Specialist I	73	3	4%
Program Specialist II	84	4	5%

## SEPARATIONS AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS FOR SURVEY RESPONDENTS

### **Response Rate**

The response rate was 42.9% with 189 of the 440 exiting employees responding to the survey. Eight envelopes were returned because of undeliverable addresses.

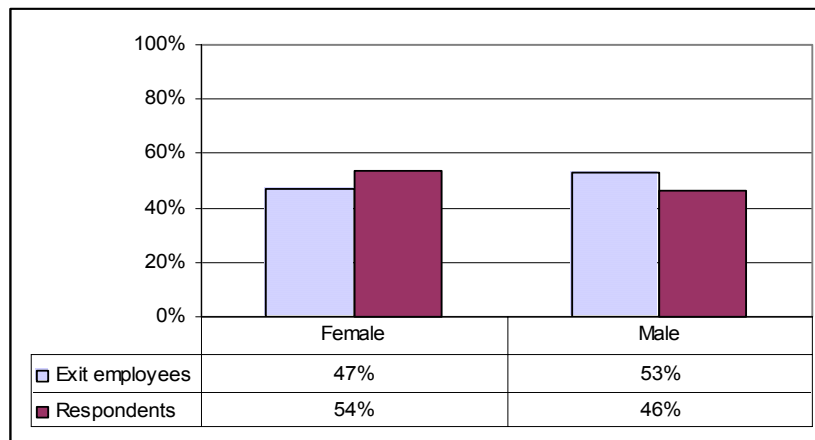
In looking at the largest departments, the highest response rate or 65% was for Department of Public Libraries as 13 of the 20 exiting employees responded. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Police each had a 47% response. Fire and Rescue Services response rate was 45% (26 of 58). The Department of Correction and Rehabilitation's response rate was 42% (15 of 36). The response rate for the Department of Public Works and Transportation was 24% (17 of 71). Thus, the population of respondents is representative of the exiting employee population.

### **Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive analysis of respondents is presented on table 6 and graphs 7 to 9. The following tables and charts refer to the opinion information.

In looking at gender composition for those individuals who responded to the survey, more White females (76% or 55%) answered the survey than White males (63% or 45%). No Native Americans were represented among survey respondents. Overall, 54% of females answered the survey and 46% of males. Comparing those percentages to the total percent of exiting employees by gender, there is a 7% higher representation of females who answered the survey than males. Thus, the opinions and perceptions in this analysis are more likely to reflect females' opinions and perceptions than males.

Chart 7. Percent of Exiting Employees and Respondents by Gender



The ethnic group Whites comprises the largest percent of respondents followed by African Americans. This is expected because these two ethnic groups are the largest

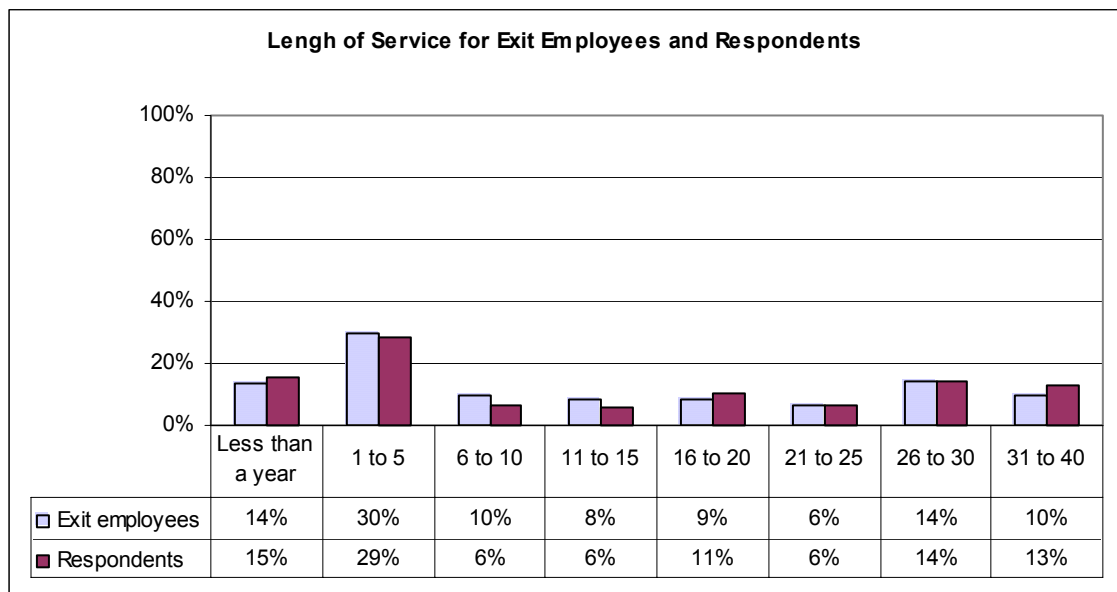
groups in the County. The ethnicity composition of respondents shows the same distribution as the exit employees. Whites are the largest group represented followed by African Americans.

Table 6: Percent and Number of Respondents by Ethnicity and Gender

	Exit Employees (N= 440)	Respondents (N= 189)	Number of Respondents		
			Female	Male	Total
African American	25.68%	18.52%	18	17	35
Asian	3.41%	3.17%	3	3	6
Hispanic	4.32%	3.17%	3	3	6
Native American	0.45%				
White	64.32%	73.54%	76	63	139
No information	1.82%	1.59%	2	1	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	102	87	189

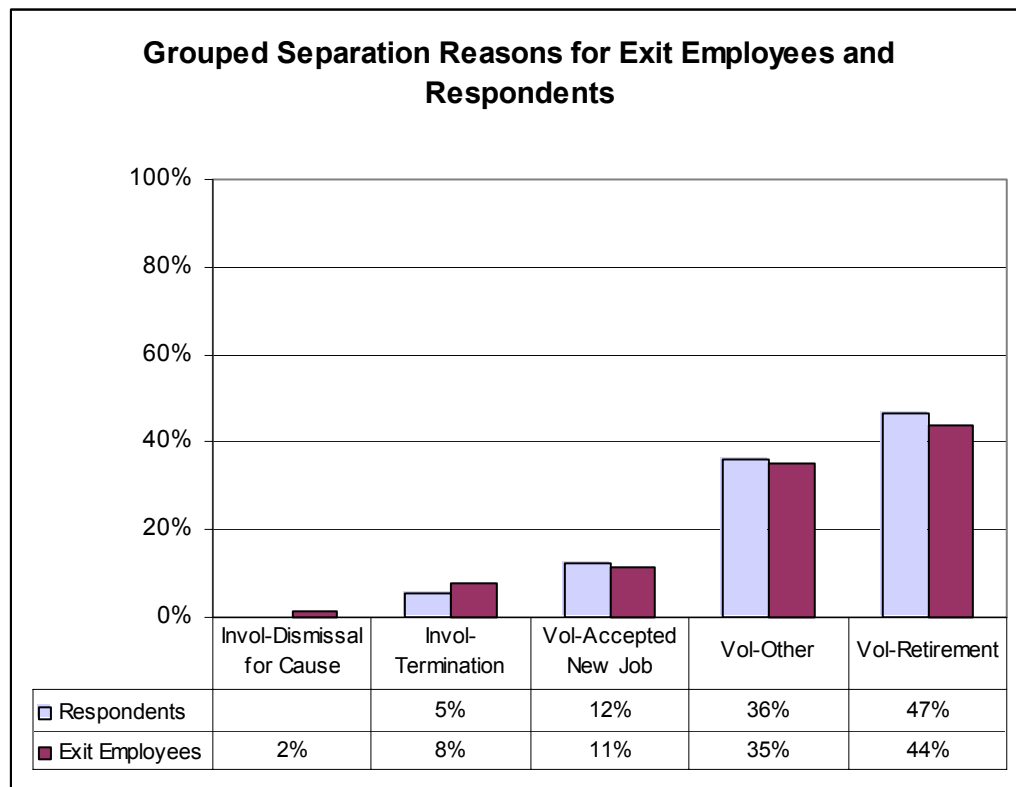
The percentages of survey respondents and exit employees for length of service (chart 8) are similar, indicating that the results from survey respondents encompass a good representation from exiting employees. Likewise, the percentages for the grouped separations (chart 9) are similar for survey respondents and exiting employees; however, there are no respondents from the Involuntary Dismissal for Cause Group.

Chart 8. Length of Service for Exit Employees and Survey Respondents



Note: Employees in a merit position are in a probation period during the first year.

Chart 9. Grouped Separation Reasons for Exit Employees and Survey Respondents



### **Management Leadership Service (MLS)**

Among the exiting employees were 19 MLS employees. Four employees were from the Department of Public Works and Transportation; three from the Department of Public Libraries; two from the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation; and two from the Department of Recreation. Eight MLS were from eight different departments.

The majority of MLS employees took voluntary retirement (13 out of 19), three employees separated because they took other jobs, and three for other reasons. The average length of service was 20 years. Ten MLS employees answered the survey and few employees provided comments. Two former MLS employees commented that MLS status/pay for performance does not equate to hard work provided.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

An exit survey questionnaire, including a cover letter and a stamped and addressed envelope was mailed to 440 exiting County employees part-time and full-time who held permanent merit positions during FY04. The following criteria was included as separation reasons: Normal retirement, early retirement, discontinued service, service connected disability, non-service-connected, disability retirement, better compensation, more flexibility in work schedules, better working conditions, more opportunities for advancement, closer to home, personal reasons, relocation out of the area, leave of absence expiration resigned, relocation out of the area, family responsibilities, return to school, health issues, quit without notice, and military obligations. Separation reasons such as death and failed probation were excluded. To increase the response rate, a follow-up questionnaire and phone call was conducted after five weeks.

The survey included a forced choice distribution using a 5 point Likert scale. The opinion questions asked about the employee's satisfaction with benefits, work life and working conditions, workforce development, compensation, and management. In addition, there were open-ended questions regarding their likes and dislikes about their employment, the reasons for leaving, and suggestions for improvement (Attachment 2, Exit Questionnaire).

Responses were entered into a database from which the overall percentages of respondents' satisfaction and dissatisfaction were calculated. Percentages of agreement are based on the percent of employees who rated an item as either 5 (strongly satisfied) or 4 (satisfied). Percentages of disagreement are based on the percent of employees who rated an item as either 1 (strongly dissatisfied) or 2 (dissatisfied).

Content analysis was used on the responses to the open-ended questions. By conducting this analysis, we created a standardized descriptor comment provided by each respondent. Frequency distribution was calculated for each type of comment.

## SURVEY RESULTS

This section reports how respondents answered the opinion questions. First, we present the overall level of satisfaction with all the benefits and working conditions and then the analysis of each.

### **Overall Satisfaction Levels**

Chart 10. Overall Satisfaction Level for the Five Opinion Areas

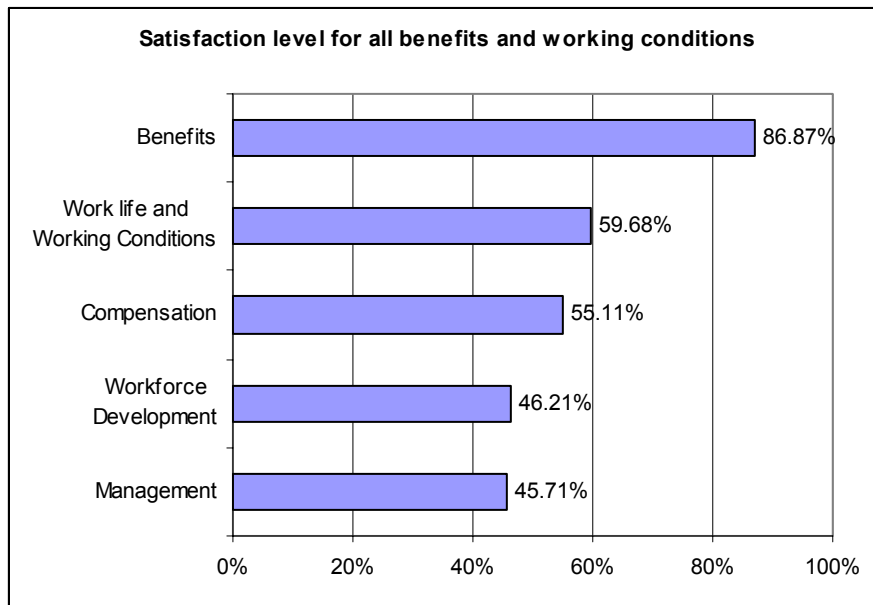
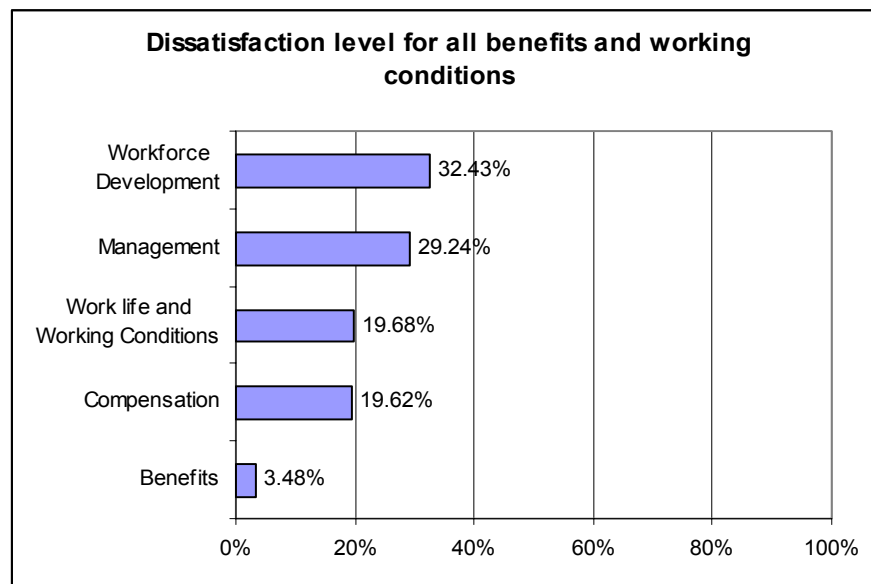


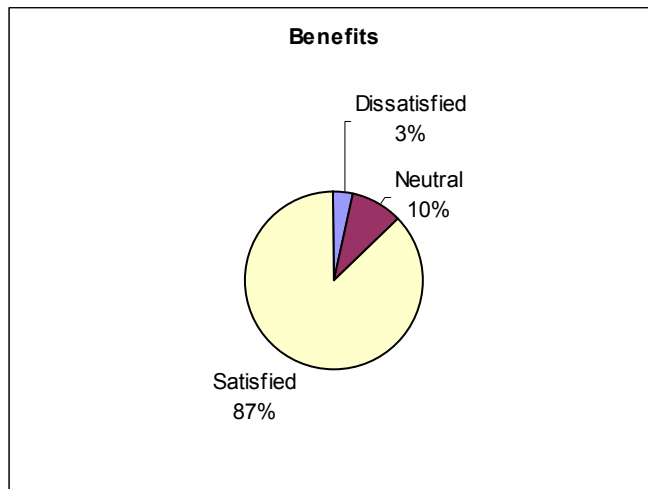
Chart 11. Overall Dissatisfaction Level for the Five Opinion Areas



## **Benefits**

The benefits section included questions about medical, dental, retirement plan, annual leave, and sick leave. Overall, 87% of survey respondents indicated satisfaction with all the benefits offered by the County, 10% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 3% were not satisfied. Of the 189 respondents, 17 employees indicated that medical and dental benefits do not apply to them. In a scale from 1 (strongly dissatisfied) to 5 (strongly satisfied), the overall average rating for benefits was 4.2 (Attachment 3, Averages).

Chart 12. Overall Percentage for Benefits



Within the group of specific benefits, the highest levels of satisfaction were for annual leave, medical, and sick leave. Comments to the open-ended questions support these findings. No specific feedback was provided regarding the dissatisfaction with benefits. Examples of the respondents' comments about their satisfaction with County benefits include:

- Good Benefits
- Good health benefits
- I liked best the benefits for part-time work

The following table presents the percentages of satisfaction for each type of the benefits. Annual leave and medical benefits received the highest levels of satisfaction.

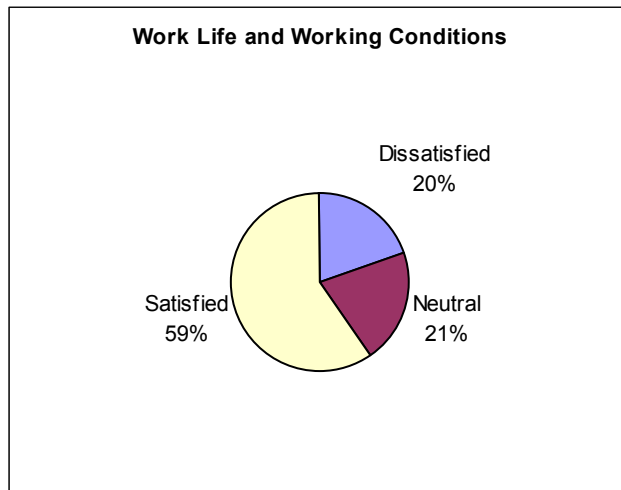
Table 7. Number and Percentage of Responses for Benefits

	Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Total		Non Applicable	No Answer
	N	%	N	%	N	%			N	N
Overall %	31	3.48%	86	9.65%	774	86.87%	100.00%			
Medical	1	0.58%	16	9.36%	154	90.06%			17	1
Dental	8	4.68%	23	13.45%	140	81.87%			17	1
Retirement Plan	9	5.14%	25	14.29%	141	80.57%			10	4
Annual Leave	4	2.19%	11	6.01%	168	91.80%			6	2
Sick Time	9	4.89%	11	5.98%	164	89.13%			5	
Paid Time Off for MLS					7	100.00%			1	1
Total- NA										
									56	
Total # of Responses	31		86		774					

### **Work Life and Working Conditions**

This section asked questions about flex time, work load, compressed schedules, overtime, interaction with co-workers, work environment, and shift times. Overall, *59.68% of respondents were satisfied with working conditions and work life issues*, 19.68% were dissatisfied, and 20.63% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The overall average rating was 3.56 on a scale 1 to 5.

Chart 13. Overall Percentage for Work Life and Working Conditions.



All seven items in Work Life and Working Conditions scored above fifty percent (Table 8). Interaction with co-workers received the highest percentage of satisfaction (77.72%) and highest mean (4.11) indicating that respondents perceived there was a high level of camaraderie and support among colleagues. Work load equity scored 51.02%



satisfaction with a mean of 3.23 signifying that several former employees perceived their workload as being not equitable.

The responses to open-ended questions complement the above information. When respondents were asked what they liked most about their employment with the County, 25% or 60 of 243 responses (see table 14 below) cited their co-workers.

Examples of the respondents' comments include:

- Caliber of co-workers
- Positive attitude of co-workers in the worst of working conditions and the ability to do the right thing when called to do so
- Co-workers were great people to work with
- Most of all my co-workers were positive people and dedicated to their jobs
- I liked my peers

Not all Work Life benefits applied to all employees. For example, 91 respondents out of 189 indicated that compressed work schedules were not available to them. Similarly, 78 respondents out of 189 indicated that Flex time did not apply to them.

Table 8. Number and Percentage of Responses for Work Life and Working Conditions.

	Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Total		Non Applicable	No Answer
	N	%	N	%	N	%			N	N
Overall %	187	19.68%	196	20.63%	567	59.68%	100.00%			
Flex time	25	23.15%	16	14.81%	67	62.04%			78	3
Work load equity	32	21.77%	40	27.21%	75	51.02%			19	5
Compressed schedules	32	33.68%	14	14.74%	49	51.58%			91	3
Overtime	27	21.60%	30	24.00%	68	54.40%			61	3
Interaction with co-workers	13	7.07%	28	15.22%	143	77.72%			2	3
Work environment	39	21.20%	42	22.83%	184	55.98%			2	3
Shift times	19	17.76%	26	24.30%	62	57.94%			74	8

## **Workforce Development**

This section addressed opportunities for career advancement, clear career paths, and training opportunities. Overall, 47% of survey respondents were satisfied with the workforce development while 32% were dissatisfied, and the remaining (21%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The overall average rating was 3.21 on a scale 1 to 5.

Chart 14. Overall Percentage for Workforce Development

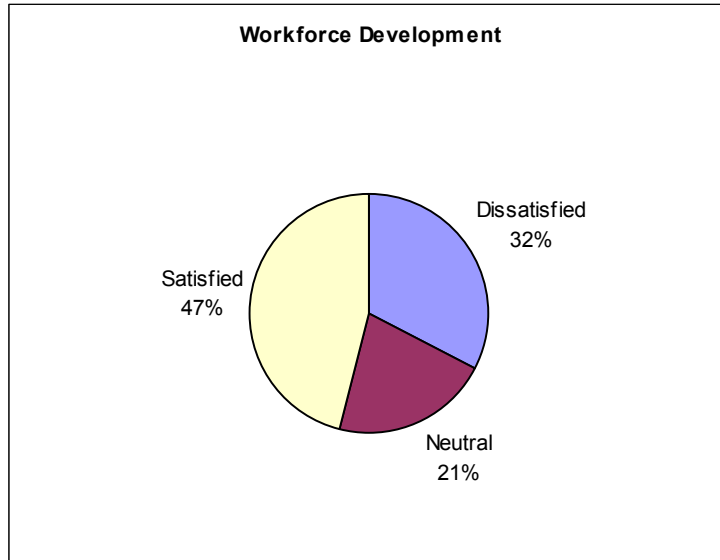


Table 9 depicts the levels of satisfaction for workforce development. The three items received satisfaction levels lower than fifty percent. Clear career paths received 25.63% and Career Advancement Opportunity scored 30.67%.

Table 9. Number and Percentage of Responses for Workforce Development

	Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Total		Non Applicable	No Answer
	N	%	N	%	N	%			N	N
Overall %	167	32.43%	110	21.36%	238	46.21%				
Career Advancement Opportunities	64	38.32%	37	33.64%	73	30.67%				
Clear Career Paths	62	37.13%	39	35.45%	61	25.63%				
Training Opportunities	41	24.55%	34	30.91%	104	43.70%				

Responses to the open-ended questions complement the quantitative data. For example, in response to "What did you like least about your employment with

Montgomery County,” lack of career advancement opportunity was the second most frequent comment (see table 15 below). Similarly, for those respondents who left the County because they took another job, better compensation and lack of career opportunities were the most common reasons indicated for taking another job.

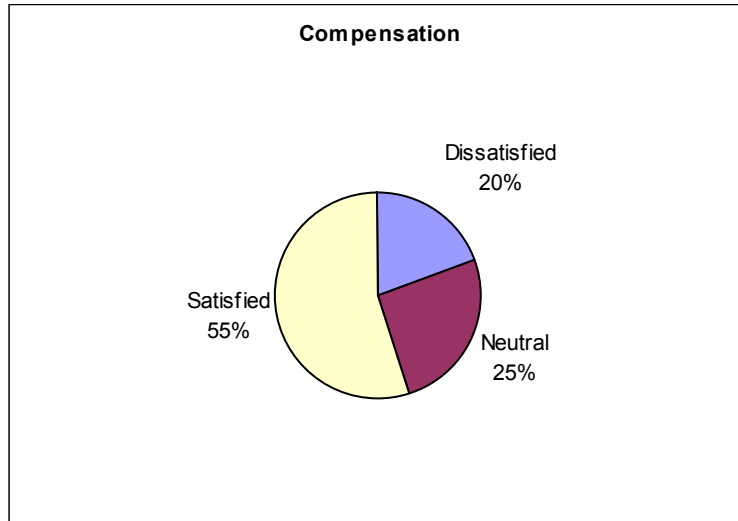
Comments to the open-ended questions support these findings. Examples of the respondents’ comments include:

- Not many opportunities for advancement
- No opportunity for advancement if you are not a minority group
- No room for advancement within the department
- Not career focused

### **Compensation**

This section had questions about pay increases, adequate annual increases, and timely reviews. Overall, 55% of survey respondents were satisfied with the compensation, 20% were dissatisfied, and 25% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The overall average rating was 3.65 on a scale 1 to 5.

Chart 15. Overall Percentage for Compensation



Among the individual items, adequacy of pay increases received the highest percentage (59.44%). As depicted on table 10, the item timeliness of performance review scored slightly below fifty percent (49.13%) percent of satisfaction. Equity of pay increases for MLS scored 70% satisfaction.

Table 10. Number and Percentage of Responses for Compensation

	Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Total		Non Applicable	No Answer
	N	%	N	%	N	%			N	N
Overall %	73	19.62%	94	25.27%	205	55.11%	100%			
Adequacy of Pay Increases	25	13.89%	48	26.67%	107	59.44%			9	
Timeless of Performance Review	45	26.01%	43	24.86%	85	49.13%			8	8
Equity of Pay Increases (MLS)	2	20.00%	1	10.00%	7	70.00%				
Your Pay Increases as an Accurate Reflection of your Level of Accomplishments (MLS)	1	11.11%	2	22.22%	6	66.67%			1	2

Some respondents who left the County indicated they took another position for the following two reasons:

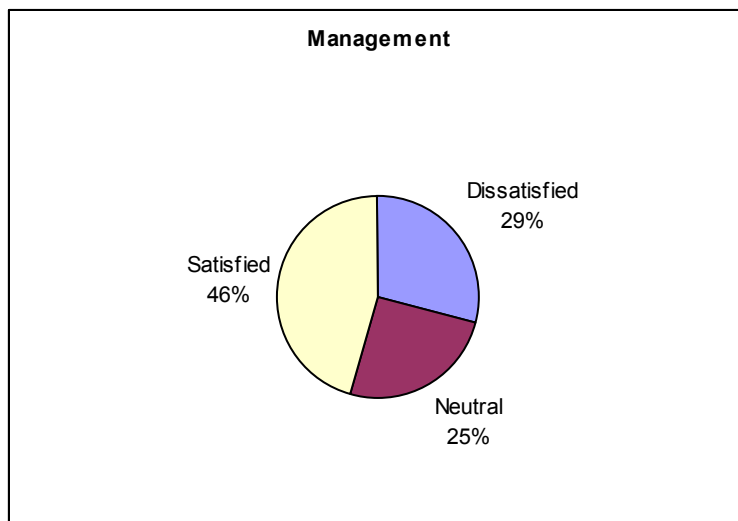
- Better opportunity to advance career
- Better compensation.

## **Management**

This section included questions about the level of support provided by managers. Specifically, the questions asked whether management considers recommendations for change, encourages career advancement/promotions, encourages training, is available to discuss challenges in the organization, treats employees fairly and with respect, and establishes clear priorities.

Overall, 46% of the survey respondents were satisfied with the support provided by managers, 29% indicated dissatisfaction, and the remaining 21% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The overall average rating was 3.25 on a scale 1 to 5.

Chart 16. Number and Percentage of Responses for Management



Among the management questions (table 11), encouraging training received over fifty percent level of satisfaction (53.18%), and treating employees fairly and with respect scored 49.71 %. Encouraging career advancement/promotion received the lowest level of satisfaction (39.74%).

Table 11. Number and Percentage of Responses for Management

	Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Total		Non Applicable	No Answer
	N	%	N	%	N	%			N	N
Overall %	348	29.24%	298	25.04%	544	45.71%	100%			
21. Considered recommendations for change	52	31.33%	45	27.11%	69	41.57%			13	10
22. Encouraged career advancement/promotion	53	33.97%	41	26.28%	62	39.74%			12	11
23. Encouraged training	43	24.86%	38	21.97%	92	53.18%			6	10
24. Communicated effectively with employees	56	31.82%	46	26.14%	74	42.05%			2	11
25. Was available to discuss challenges in the organization	54	31.40%	40	23.26%	78	45.35%			5	12
26. Treated employees fairly and with respect	45	25.71%	43	24.57%	87	49.71%			2	12
27. Established clear priorities	45	26.16%	45	26.16%	82	47.67%			4	13

The comments from the open-ended questions support the quantitative findings. When survey participants were asked “*What did you like least about your employment with Montgomery County,*” the highest frequency response was management (21.62%, see table 15 below). Examples of the respondents’ comments include:

- Some managers and supervisors had negative attitudes and poor judgment
- Lack of communication between supervisors and employees
- Poor management at the department as several problems were allowed to continue
- Management has double standards
- Lack of leadership in our department
- The inability of supervisors to appropriately use knowledge and opinions of experienced employees

## OPINION ANALYSIS

To obtain an insight of the current workforce concerns and issues, the survey had open-ended questions. These questions were about what former employees liked and disliked about their County employment as well as suggestions for improvement. Tables 12 to 16 present the content analysis.

### ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

As explained in the methodology section, content analysis was used on the written comments. This technique is a qualitative method for analyzing written comments and finding a descriptor or descriptors of the comments made by respondents. The descriptors allow us to find the frequency of the comments. The frequency is based on the total number of comments made rather than the number of people who responded. For example, in preparing tables 12 to 16 below, if a descriptor had a frequency equal to 1, and it was a general comment, it was not included in the total frequency count.

#### **Reasons for Leaving the County**

Table 12. Frequency of responses for the question: Why did you leave Montgomery County?

<b>Type of Comment</b>	<b>Frequency of Response*</b>	<b>%</b>
Retirement	55	33%
Better Compensation	16	10%
Family Reasons	13	8%
No Career Advancement	13	8%
Others and General comments	13	8%
Management	12	7%
Disability	10	6%
Commute/Cost of living	6	4%
Personal Reasons	5	3%
New job	5	3%
Health Reasons	5	3%
Discontinued service retirement	3	2%
Work Load	3	2%
Work environment	3	2%
Shift Schedule	2	1%
Budget cuts/Decrease in Resources	2	1%
Fail probation	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Based on the total number of comments made rather than the number of people who responded

### **Former Employees Who Took Other Jobs**

The exit survey had a question for former employees who left the County to accept new jobs. Among the respondents, 81 out of 189 (or 42.85%) left to take new jobs. Of those, 33 people went to private companies, 28 individuals went to another state/local government, 10 went to the federal government, and 10 individuals took jobs with non-profit agencies.

For those exiting employees who accepted new jobs, the survey asked the reasons for taking a position outside the County. Table 13 has the frequency for their answers. Career opportunity (19 out of 57 responses) and better compensation (17 out of 57) were the most common reasons provided by respondents.

Table.13. Frequency for the question: What was it that encouraged you to take another position outside Montgomery County?

Type of Comment	Frequency of Response*	%
Career Opportunities	19	33.33%
Better Compensation	17	29.82%
Family Reasons	8	14.04%
Commute/Cost of living	5	8.77%
Position ended	3	5.26%
Nothing	3	5.26%
Personal Reasons	2	3.51%
Total	57	100.00%

\* Based on the total number of comments made rather than the number of people who responded

Some of the respondents' comments were better compensation, moving to an organization with better management and more flexibility, and less stress. Few commented that they took the job to be closer to home, faster upward mobility, or a position that offered opportunities for promotion and career development.



**What Former Employees Liked Most About Their Employment With Montgomery County**

Table.14. Frequency for the question: What did you like most about your employment with Montgomery County?

Type of Comment	Frequency of Response*	%
Co-workers	60	24.69%
Benefits	48	19.75%
Serving the Community/Serving clients	22	9.05%
Work life	21	8.64%
Work environment	20	8.23%
Management	15	6.17%
Compensation/Pay increases	15	6.17%
Training/training Opportunities	8	3.29%
Job security	7	2.88%
Commute/Cost of living	6	2.47%
Respect	6	2.47%
Progressive County/Reputation	5	2.06%
Diversity	4	1.65%
Everything	3	1.23%
Retirement	3	1.23%
Total	243	100.00%

\* Based on the total number of comments made rather than the number of people who responded

Comments from some of the survey respondents illustrate their perceptions about having nice and friendly co-workers; their satisfaction with annual and sick leave, and compensation. Others expressed satisfaction with retirement benefits and working with the public.

**What Former Employees Liked Least About Their Employment With Montgomery County**

Table 15. Frequency for the question: What did you like least about your employment with Montgomery County?

Type of Comment	Frequency of Response*	%
Management	32	21.62%
No Career Opportunities	19	12.84%
Work Load/Short staff	12	8.11%
Others	10	6.76%
Politics	9	6.08%
Commute/Cost of living	8	5.41%
Nothing	8	5.41%
Co-workers	6	4.05%
Compensation	6	4.05%
General comment	6	4.05%
Budget/Resources	5	3.38%
Performance/Reward	5	3.38%
Working conditions/Work Environment	5	3.38%
Bureaucracy	4	2.70%
Communication	4	2.70%
Policies	3	2.03%
Morale/Stress	3	2.03%
Training	3	2.03%
Total	148	100.00%

\* Based on the total number of comments made rather than the number of people who responded

Although management received the highest percentage of the least liked among former employees who responded to the survey, only few employees provided specific information related to what they didn't like about management. When looking at the comments about management by department, we found that the dislike about management is not for a specific department rather across the board. The comments about management included the lack of communication, lack of support, and lack of leadership.

### **What Former Employees Would Like To Change**

Table 16. Frequency for the question: If you could have changed something about your job, what would it have been?

<b>Type of Comment</b>	<b>Frequency of Responses*</b>	<b>%</b>
Management	31	24.22%
Work load/Caseload/Schedules	21	16.41%
Nothing	13	10.16%
Working Conditions	13	10.16%
Less stress/Improve morale	9	7.03%
Better salary	8	6.25%
More staff	8	6.25%
More/different training	8	6.25%
Performance	7	5.47%
Career opportunities	7	5.47%
Improve communication	3	2.34%
Total	128	100.00%

Although some former employees said they would not change anything, others provided important suggestions. Aspects related to management were brought up by former employees. For example, about twenty percent of respondents who made comments said management was what they liked least. Some suggestions about changing management issues included more support, more caring and understanding managers, more management responsibilities, and getting more specifics about job expectations. Some commented that more adequate work distribution and more staff were needed. Few comments were made about having more flex time and opportunity to do telecommuting.

Based on the respondent's comments, management should improve their managerial skills and create a positive work environment. Good management creates a work environment where employees feel respected and appreciated.

## **Summary Findings**

### Workforce findings

- Looking at all the separation reasons, 28% of employees left for personal reasons and 26% for normal retirement. Among individuals who commented that they left for personal reasons, some expressed that better compensation, more career opportunities, and management issues were the reasons for leaving. For the grouped separation reasons, 44% of employees separated as voluntary retirement
- Forty-three percent of employees stayed with the County less than five years with thirteen percent of them staying less than a year and thirty percent staying between one and five years.

### Opinion survey findings

- Eighty-seven percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with the benefits
- Sixty percent of respondents were satisfied with work life and working conditions while they were County employees
- Fifty-five percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with compensation
- Forty-six percent of respondents were satisfied with workforce development
- Respondents said they most liked their co-workers
- Forty-five percent of respondents were satisfied with management
- Some suggestions made by respondents include more support from management, better management skills, more adequate work load, and improving working conditions

## **Conclusions**

The County has a vested interest in retaining productive employees and to eliminate those factors that contribute to employees electing to leave voluntarily. The County exit survey provides valuable information and perceptions from separating personnel and about their work experience. Their views are indicators of the existing organizational culture and lets managers know about the successful work environment and areas needing improvement. Thus, the information from former employees provides tools to effect actions for improving employee retention. Most importantly, it shows the County's commitment to create a better work environment to contribute and enhance employee satisfaction.

## ATTACHMENTS

### Attachment 1. Turnover Rate for 2003, Personnel Management Review Report.

#### NUMBER OF SEPARATIONS BY REASON FOR SEPARATION 1992-2003

Separation Reason		1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	% of 2003	Notes
		(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	total	
<b>Voluntary</b>															
	No return Lwop	5	6	6	2	4	5	9	7	12	12	11	12	2.41%	all Lwop
	AWOL	1	6	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	6	7	3	0.60%	aban and LWOP 3m
	New job	50	53	55	41	43	47	62	46	91	65	42	0	0.00%	
	Non-specified personal reasons	140	132	132	145	122	132	141	183	186	165	133	108	21.69%	
	Relocation out of area											4	16	3.21%	
	Family responsibilities											2	8	1.61%	
	Better compensation											7	23	4.62%	Pregnancy
	More flexible work schedule											2	1	0.20%	
	Better working conditions											2	1	0.20%	
	More opportunity for advancement											4	21	4.22%	
	Easier commute											4	5	1.00%	
	Return to School											0	1	0.20%	
	Quit - no notice	2	1	4	7	2	1	0	5	5	8	6	4	0.80%	
	Normal retirement	65	44	240	46	59	61	87	61	90	75	146	145	29.12%	
	Early retirement	<u>17</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>6.83%</u>	
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>76.71%</b>	
<b>Management</b>															
	Disciplinary	3	3	0	4	0	1	3	4	1	1	0	0	0.00%	
	Unsatisfactory performance	9	11	6	11	12	9	3	9	6	2	2	2	0.40%	
	Misconduct	11	14	11	8	5	8	8	6	1	6	6	2	0.40%	
	Non-disciplinary				3	3	9	11	2	0	1	0	2	0.40%	failure to maintain license
	Excess absences							<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	5	0	3	0.60%	
	Failed Probation										<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>3.82%</u>	
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5.62%</b>	

**Management/fiscal**

Discontinued service retirement	39	25	5	7	27	11	14	5	13	19	7	28	5.62%
Reduction-in-force	4	3	3	1	8	0	3	1	0	1	0	2	0.40%
Lack of funding	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0.40%</u>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6.43%</b>

end of term apt

**Medical/other**

Unknown/other	3	3	8	0	4	5	0	3	3	13	11	6	1.20%
Service-connected disability ret.	26	33	33	34	31	23	31	27	24	23	20	22	4.42%
Non-service con. disability ret.	12	19	20	17	14	10	13	13	19	17	14	11	2.21%
Other medical	4	0	1	2	0	4	5	1	0	0	1	7	1.41%
Death	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2.01%</u>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>11.24%</b>

<b>TOTAL SEPARATIONS</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>498</b>	
<b>Total employees</b>	<b>7094</b>	<b>7079</b>	<b>7040</b>	<b>7133</b>	<b>7053</b>	<b>7082</b>	<b>7191</b>	<b>7397</b>	<b>7592</b>	<b>7912</b>	<b>8099</b>	<b>8083</b>	
<b>TURNOVER RATE</b>	<b>5.67%</b>	<b>5.34%</b>	<b>9.40%</b>	<b>4.96%</b>	<b>5.10%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>	<b>5.81%</b>	<b>5.53%</b>	<b>6.51%</b>	<b>5.98%</b>	<b>6.05%</b>	<b>6.16%</b>	

## Attachment 2. Exit Questionnaire

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Douglas M. Duncan  
*County Executive*

Joseph Adler  
*Director*

Date

Former Employee Address  
City,  
State ZipCode

Dear Former Employee:

The Montgomery County Office of Human Resources believes that employee involvement and feedback are critical in ensuring that Montgomery County continues to attract and retain the best work force possible.

As an exiting employee, your participation in an Exit Survey will provide valuable information regarding the work environment in the County. Your feedback will assist us in identifying changes that may improve our workplace in the future.

Enclosed is a "Montgomery County Questionnaire." Please complete the questionnaire and return it to us in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by March 19, 2004.

Your input in this information-gathering process is very important and greatly appreciated. Please be assured that all survey responses are confidential. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, please contact Cristina Kirkbride at 240-777-5157.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos Vargas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carlos Vargas, Manager  
Staffing and Organizational Development

## Montgomery County Exit Questionnaire

**Purpose:** To receive feedback from departing County employees regarding the work environment in the County.

**COMPLETION OF THIS FORM IS VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Former Department and Division:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** All answers use a 1 to 5 scale, with number 1 indicating the least amount of satisfaction and 5 indicating the most satisfaction. Circle the appropriate number or N/A for "Not Applicable."

### SECTION I

<b>Benefits</b>						
1. Medical	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2. Dental	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3. Retirement plan	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. Annual leave	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5. Sick leave	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6. Paid Time Off (only for MLS)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>Work Life and Working Conditions</b>						
7. Flex time	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8. Work load equity	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9. Compressed schedules	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10. Overtime	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11. Interaction with co-workers	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12. Work environment	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13. Shift times	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>Workforce Development</b>						
14. Career advancement opportunity	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15. Clear career paths	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16. Training opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>Compensation</b>						
17. Adequacy of pay increases	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18. Timeliness of performance reviews	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19. Equity of pay increases (only for MLS)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20. Your pay increases as an accurate reflection of your level of accomplishments (only for MLS)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A



<b>Management</b>						
21. Considered recommendations for change	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
22. Encouraged career advancement/promotion	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
23. Encouraged training	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
24. Communicated effectively with employees	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
25. Was available to discuss challenges in the organization	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
26. Treated employees fairly and with respect	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
27. Established clear priorities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

## **SECTION II**

28. If applicable, is your new job with: \_\_\_\_ Another State/Local Government;  
 \_\_\_\_ Federal Government; \_\_\_\_ Private Company; \_\_\_\_ Non-Profit Agency?

29. What did you like most about working with Montgomery County?

30. What did you like least about your employment with Montgomery County?

31. Why did you leave Montgomery County?

32. If you could have changed something about your job, what would it have been?

33. What was it that encouraged you to take a different position outside of Montgomery County?

34. Please state any additional comments you would like to share about your employment with Montgomery County.

35. Not applicable (This question is for Public Libraries employees only.)

## **SECTION III**

**For Management Leadership Service (MLS) Participants**

<b>Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following MLS's components</b>						
36. Pay for performance	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
37. Flexible classification	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
38. Leadership institute	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
39. Leadership 360 degree skills' assessment	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
40. Career enhancement opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
41. Advanced leadership training	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
42. Promotional opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

**Please check the appropriate answer**

43. How did you enter MLS?					
Reclassification	Promotion	New Hire	Transfer	Other	

**Please explain or provide examples about the following:**

44. What do you feel were the benefits of the MLS?
45. If you could change one aspect of MLS, what would it have been?

### Attachment 3. Averages

